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Tattoos on the Heart

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Tattoos on the Heart

Reader's Guide for the 2013 LMU Common Book

LMU Mission

- How does Fr. Boyle's description of *kinship* correspond to LMU's goal of developing "men and women for others"?
- Given LMU's identity as a Jesuit/Marymount university, how does one person's service in a particular community matter? Why does it matter?

Chicana/o Studies & Ethnic Studies

- What do you know about East Los Angeles, and what descriptors would you assign to it (examples: Mexican, dangerous, many murals, Catholic, etc.)?
- What are the ways in which East Los Angeles residents and gang members are imagined? What social and ideological structures support these images? How do East LA residents and former gang members represent themselves?

Education

- How does education (or lack of education) play a role in the stories told in *Tattoos*?
- To what extent does learning that takes place outside of the classroom prepare gang members for life outside of the gang culture?

Entrepreneurship

- In what ways do lack of job training and unavailability of jobs perpetuate gang violence and crime in low-income communities?
- What makes the "Homeboy model" successful? What is missing from this model?

Gender & Family Studies

- What are the unique challenges that homegirls face as women?
- What is the relationship between parenting and gang membership?
- How are "fathers" and "mothers" represented in this text?

History

- What historical factors led to the development of poor and mostly-Latino neighborhoods like Boyle Heights?
- Why did gangs form in these neighborhoods?
- How can these historical explanations for poverty and racial segregation inform the types of personal and policy decisions we make as we try to build a more just and equitable city for the future?

Philosophy & Ethics

- Who are the heroes of *Tattoos of the Heart*, who are the villains, and why?
- What fundamental ethical problems are presented in this text?

Political Science

- How does the "state" (e.g., law enforcement, politicians, etc.) respond to gang violence, particularly in Los Angeles?
- How do Boyle Heights community members respond to gang violence?
- What role does incarceration play for gang members? Does rehabilitation occur in prison?

Psychology

- If Homeboy Industries were to be described as a "Recovery Model," how would you describe the essential elements of its success?
- How do *inadequacy* and *shame* function as obstacles to giving and receiving?
- How would you describe the relationship between hope and empowerment? Between despair and delinquency?



